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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/911,621	07/25/2001	Seisaku Iwasa	IS-US000501	3456

22919 7590 07/05/2002

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EXAMINER

STASHICK, ANTHONY D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3728

DATE MAILED: 07/05/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/911,621	IWASA ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Anthony D Stashick	3728

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 25 July 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 - a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>3</u>	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: on page 9, line 19, "bag" should be --belt--; on page 16, line 1, "11" should be --110-- (see Figure 4). Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1, line 7, recites the phrase "the first control unit". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Claim 1, lines 8-9 recite the limitations "the bag ejection interval" and "the posture of the bag". There is insufficient antecedent basis for these limitations in the claim. Claim 13, line 1 recites the limitation "the transfer unit". It is unclear as to which transfer unit is being referred to, the first or the second.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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5. Claims 1-10 and 12-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reichental et al. '406 in view of Kreager 4,517,790. Reichental et al. '406 discloses all the limitations substantially as claimed including the following: form-fill-seal machine (see Figure 1); a first transfer unit (44, 45) for transferring the separated bags to another (second) transfer unit (M, 82); provided downstream; a first drive unit (46, 47) for driving the first transfer unit; a control unit (computer with hardware and software including electric motor, drive belt, etc., see col. 7, line 66-col. 8, line 7); for controlling the first transfer unit (including speed of transfer unit if desired); the control unit controls speed of transfer unit; first transfer unit is a belt; the first transfer unit comprises two belts (44, 45) holding each of the bags sandwiched between them (see Figure 3); means for changing the distance between the two belts (see col. 6, lines 35-38 and col. 8, lines 1-7) with the control unit able to control the distance between the two belts; second transfer unit (M, 82) for receiving, transferring, and ejecting the bags transferred from the first transfer unit (see Figure 15); the second transfer unit is a belt (Figure 15, reference 82) with a guide bar (shown in Figure 15 with bags located between them) approximately orthogonal to the direction of transfer. Reichental et al. '406 does not disclose or teach the belt of the first transfer unit being inclined moving diagonally downward. Kreager '790 teaches that a form-fill-seal machine that seals tube can have a first transfer unit with the belt of the first transfer unit inclined (see Figure 1) so as to move the sealed packages to a second staging section next to the form-fill-seal machine. Henceforth, with such inclination, the bags would move diagonally downward shifting from a vertical to a slanted direction. Therefore, it would have been obvious, to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to slant the first transfer unit of Reichental et al. '406, as taught by Kreager '790, to move the packages to a second staging section next to the form-fill-seal machine. With respect to claims 14-19, since a computer include memory that can hold and control many different machine parts, it would have been obvious to have the computer of Reichental et al. '406

control any moving mechanisms of the form-fill-seal machine and to store and display such data to the user of the machine.

6. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the references as modified and applied to claim 7 above in view of Mabry 4,719,741. The references as modified and applied to claim 7 above disclose all the limitations of the claim except for the machine including a cooling unit for spraying cooling gas on the sealed part of each of the bags sandwiched between the belts. Mabry '741 teaches that after heat sealing the bags in a form-fill-seal machine, a cool spray can be applied to the seal to cool the seal to increase the seal strength and reduce the likelihood of leakage or total failure of the seal (see col. 4, lines 30-53). Therefore, it would have been obvious to place a cooling spray, such as that taught in Mabry'741, in the machine of the references as modified and applied above, to cool the seal, increase the seal strength and reduce the likelihood of leakage or total failure of the seal.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure and are cited on form 892 enclosed herewith.

Telephone inquiries regarding the status of applications or other general questions, by persons entitled to the information, "should be directed to the group clerical personnel and not to the examiners. In as much as the official records and applications are located in the clerical section of the examining groups, the clerical personnel can readily provide status information without contacting the examiners", M.P.E.P. 203.08. The Group clerical receptionist number is (703) 308-1148.

If in receiving this Office Action it is apparent to applicant that certain documents are missing, e.g., copies of references cited, form PTO-1449, form PTO-892, etc., requests for copies of such papers or other general questions should be directed to Tech Center 3700 Customer Service at (703) 306-5648, email CustomerService3700@uspto.gov.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anthony D Stashick whose telephone number is 703-308-3876. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mickey Yu can be reached on 703-308-2672. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9302 for regular communications and 703-872-9303 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1148.

Other helpful telephone numbers are listed for applicant's benefit.

Allowed Files & Publication	(703) 305-8322
Assignment Branch	(703) 308-9287
Certificates of Correction	(703) 305-8309
Drawing Corrections/Draftsman	(703) 305-8404/8335
Fee Increase Questions	(703) 305-5125
Intellectual Property Questions	(703) 305-8217
Petitions/Special Programs	(703) 305-9282
Terminal Disclaimers	(703) 305-8408
Informal Fax for 3728	(703) 308-7769

If the information desired is not provided above, or has been changed, please do not call the examiner (this is the latest information provided to him) but the general information help line below.

Information Help line	1-800-786-9199
Internet PTO-Home Page	http://www.uspto.gov/



Anthony D Stashick
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3728

ADS
June 30, 2002